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The Lord has need of him

The saved soul, a willing instrument for Christ

A meditation about Genesis 16:7-14; 49:10-12; Exodus 13:11-16; Zechariah 9:9-10; Luke 19:28-34

We love to think of the ransom the Lord Jesus has paid for us, the awesome price of His life, of His blood. It was so great that it included everything He owned, even His life. He laid it down and surrendered it in order to redeem us and to acquire the church as His own bride. We cannot really understand what the Lord Jesus has seen in us, when we think of who we are in ourselves. Yet He saw something attractive in us and wanted to lay down His life for us.

A colt of donkeys

We see something of our natural state in the image of the wild donkey, we have been reading about in Genesis 16. Ishmael would be a wild man. His hand would be against every man, and every man's hand against him. A wild man, that is someone you cannot tame. He is completely characterized by his own will. This shows our natural condition as sinners who are lost and are characterized by self-will, by stubbornness, and by wildness.

And Exodus 13 shows that such a donkey was actually an animal that the Lord God could not use. There were all kinds of animals that were meant for the Lord. First-born animals, that were to be sacrificed on the altar. Think of sheep, cattle and goats, they could all be sacrificed on the altar. This was pleasing to the Lord God. But there was really no use for such a donkey. That wild donkey, it awaited a sure death. We can read this in this chapter. When a donkey could not be redeemed,

the animal's neck should be broken (Ex. 13:13). That strong neck, which spoke of self-will and stubbornness, had to be broken. The animal faced the judgment of death. This shows something about ourselves as well, our natural condition. We were under the judgment of death.

Fortunately, it was also possible to redeem such a firstling of a donkey with a lamb. It is noteworthy, however, that this part of the legislation is in Exodus 13, which deals with the exodus from the land of Egypt. The context of this chapter is the institution of the Passover and then the exodus. All the firstborn in the land of Egypt had died, even the firstborn of the cattle were affected by the judgment. But for the people of Israel there was redemption. They were led out of Egypt, the land of slavery. The Lord God now had a right to all the firstborn of the Israelites, including all the firstborn of their animals.

And even for the firstling of a donkey, that was worth almost nothing and that was not pleasing to God either, there was the possibility of redemption. Although they were actually under the judgment of death, you might say, the Lord intervenes here. We read here in the legislation in connection with the exodus from Egypt the special rule, "But every firstling of a donkey you shall redeem with a lamb" (Ex. 13:13). A young sheep was taken, and it was then sacrificed in the place of the donkey. So the donkey was saved and could remain in the service of its master, its owner; and its life was spared. It shows us God's mercy even for such an animal.

And when we see the wild donkey as a type of ourselves, this also shows us the grace of our God for lost sinners. The price was paid for our redemption; we remember that it was a precious ransom, because the Lord gave His own life for us. Now we belong to Him. How wonderful to know that all those who have been bought by the Lord Jesus, and who belong to Him, have been saved by grace. We were bought at a price (1 Cor. 6:20). The ransom has been paid by the Lord Jesus. In this way we have become His possession, and we are at His service. Then He also wants to use us as instruments for His glory.

The entry into Jerusalem

We have also seen in Luke's Gospel that the Lord could use such a colt of donkeys in His service. In Luke 19 we read about Jesus' entry into Jerusalem, His entry as the King of Israel. A colt of donkeys was also used for this, in accordance with the prophecy of Zechariah 9. No man had ever sat on that colt; it was still young. But the Lord Jesus wanted to use it, and He said, "Loose him and bring him here. And if anyone asks you, Why are you loosing him, thus you shall say to him: Because the

Lord has need of him". And so it is with you and with me. The Lord has bought us; we were once sinners, self-willed people, perhaps wild and untameable. He has bought us at that awesome price. When we think of the natural state that characterized us, He has changed this by the price of His blood. We are His own possession, and it implies that we have been bought and paid for.

We have also read, "For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's" (1 Cor. 6:20). Our natural state was totally wrong; we were wayward in character. Our state as the redeemed of the Lord is that we have been bought and paid for. And thirdly, there is a new role as servants of the Lord Jesus: He needs us. As people who have been saved, we are set free from all ties, all hindrances. Untie it, we read here of this donkey's colt. We have been set free from all obstacles to serve the Lord. We are His possession, and He needs us in His service. He needs you, and He needs me. He needs you, brother or sister, because He has acquired a right over you. Precisely because He paid that high ransom price, He has all rights over us. We have been bought and paid for, and the Master needs us. Only He can say that, He has authority over all.

It is a wonderful story, this entry into Jerusalem. Christ was so poor; He had nothing, not even to lay down His head. He owned nothing and yet He could dispose of a riding animal, needed to bring Him into Jerusalem as the coming King. What the Lord Jesus was doing is really just fulfilling prophecy. Zechariah had prophesied about this (Zech. 9:9). Your King comes to you, meek and lowly. Sitting on a donkey's colt, and not seated high on a horse. He was humble, and meek. He came as the Savior of His people.

And in order to fulfill this prophecy, He had sent two of His disciples here and He said, Go there and there and bring this colt. And if there might be any protest, you should give the reason, "Because the Lord has need of him." That was enough, it decided everything. Isn't that wonderful? The owners said, Why are you loosing the colt, it has never been used as a riding animal. They answered, "The Lord has need of him." That's how simple it is. And so it is with us, because He needs us too. Let us consider where the Lord wants to use us. What was needed here was this riding animal, which may also have been redeemed and for which a price had been paid. In any case, it was loosed from all ties, from all hindrances. And so it was fit to serve the Lord.

The Lord has need of you

The colt was needed to carry the Lord Jesus, to bring Him into the city of God. After having thrown their garments on the colt, the disciples set Jesus on him; and so began the triumphal entry into Jerusalem, the city of the great King. And in the same way the Lord Jesus wants to use us for His glory, to carry Him through the world as His servants. When the Lord Jesus entered the city, the people shouted, "Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the LORD. Peace in heaven", eternal peace with God. The Lord Jesus would achieve this through His work on the cross. That is very remarkable: Peace in heaven, and glory in the highest! There is no peace on earth yet. The angels did sing about that at the beginning of Luke's Gospel. But this peace on earth is still future. The Lord Jesus wept over the city when He entered it, because they did not know "especially in this your day, the things that make for your peace" (v. 42). They were hidden from their eyes.

Peace has now been made in heaven. Peace with God for everyone who belongs to the Lord Jesus, in this day of grace (Rom. 5:1). God's throne has become a throne of grace (Heb. 4:16), and we can boldly draw near. And later, when Christ returns, there will also be made peace on earth. But in this world where the Lord Jesus is still rejected, we can now glorify Him, carry Him, and give Him the place that is rightfully His, the place of honor. He needs you, brother and sister. He needs us to glorify Him, already now here on earth.

I remember seeing a Bible owned by a boy in the assembly, not in this place. It is a long time ago. In the first pages was this text written from Luke 19: "The Lord has need of him." That little Bible was given to this boy, perhaps after he had finished Sunday school. Every time he opened his Bible, he could see the text: the Lord has need of you. It made a deep impression on me. Unfortunately, it did not end well with this boy. He died in an accident, and we are not sure whether he was saved. And that is serious. We do hope and pray that he was saved. But it would have been so nice if that young man had shown in his life that he belonged to the Lord Jesus and had wanted to glorify Him. So let us serve Him with a firm decision of our hearts, because He needs us too. For each one of us He has a task to perform. And very soon the time will come that the Lord Jesus will return, we have sung about this, "Lord Jesus, come." He will come for His own in order to take His bride to Himself. For in the halls of heaven, perfect thanks will be given to the Lamb, slain for us.

But the Lord Jesus will also actually return from heaven with His church here on earth. His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives and He will make His entry into Jerusalem once again. He also spoke about this: "You shall see Me no more till you say, Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD!" (Matt. 23:39). Then these words will be heard again in Jerusalem, the same words that sounded some 2,000 years ago: "Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the LORD!" (Luke 19:38). And then the prophecy of Zechariah will again be fulfilled: "Behold, your King is coming to you; lowly and riding on a donkey, a colt, the foal of a donkey" (Zech. 9:9).

This is also what the prophecy in Genesis 49 talks about. In Jacob's last words, we find the donkey again as the bearer of Shiloh, our Lord Jesus Christ. He is the mighty Ruler, for the scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, "until Shiloh comes." He is the peace-bringer, and the name Shiloh speaks of the Lord Jesus as the great Solomon, the prince of peace. And to Him shall be the obedience of the people, and of all the other nations (Gen. 49:10-11).

So there will be a time of blessing, soon after the return of the Lord Jesus for His people Israel. And the nations will also serve Him and obey Him. Not only His own people Israel will recognize Him as their Messiah, but all the nations here on earth will bow down before Him. He is the Prince of peace, for He will reign "from sea to sea", as we can read in Zechariah 9:10. He shall speak peace to the nations. Here you have this peace once again, peace here on earth. His dominion will extend from sea to sea, and from the River to the ends of the earth. Every knee will bow before Him.

And as believers from among the Gentiles, we have already submitted to Him. For the apostle Paul, as you can read in the letter to the Romans, had been sent to bring people among all the nations to obedience to the faith (Rom. 1:5-15). Obedience to the faith: that is exactly what characterizes us now as believers from the Gentiles. But soon all the nations will obey Him openly and even forcibly. Every knee will bow before Him, serve Him and honor the mighty King, the King of kings and Lord of lords. "He binds his donkey to the vine, and his donkey's colt to the choice vine" (Gen. 49:11a).

Here we find again the donkey as His riding animal. He will bind His donkey to the vine and His donkey's colt to the choice vine. This speaks of the time of blessing in the Kingdom of Christ, which will then dawn. There will be abundant harvests; and there will be an abundance of vines and of wine. Normally you would tie a donkey somewhere to a tree, to a fence or whatever, but here the donkey is tied to the

choice vine. There will be so many vines that this is possible. And this occurs because the Lord will richly answer the heavens and the earth, as it is written in the book of Hosea: "I will answer the heavens, and they shall answer the earth. The earth shall answer with grain, with new wine and with oil; they shall answer Jezreel" (Hos. 2:21-22).

So there will be a wealth of wheat, young wine and oil, a wealth of wine and vineyards. The Messiah will soon tie His donkey to the vine. The wine is also a picture of the joy of the coming Kingdom, the time of blessing that will then dawn. "He washed His garments in wine, and His clothes in the blood of grapes." You don't normally do that either. "His eyes are darker than wine, and His teeth whiter than milk" (Gen. 49:11-12). All this speaks of the glory of the Lord Jesus.

"My Beloved is white and ruddy," we read in the Song of songs (Song 5:10). His teeth are whiter than milk, as we have seen in the prophecy about Shiloh in Genesis 49. White, that is spotless. And red, the blood of grapes, has also been mentioned in the blessing of Judah, "His eyes are darker than wine." It is a time of blessing, of riches, of prosperity, that will then dawn for Israel and for the world. And we, as the heavenly bride of Christ, will also share in that special time of blessing.

What a prospect we have as the bride of the Lamb! The Lord Jesus will come, and we are going meet Him in the air. We learn from John 17 that the Lord Jesus prayed for this: "Father, I desire that they also whom You gave Me may be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory which You have given Me" (John 17:24). We will behold His infinite, heavenly glory in His Father's house, and then we will appear with Him in glory! Let us serve the Lord Jesus, that humble King, even now as willing instruments in His service, so that He can use us for the glory of His Name. The Lord has need of you.
